

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

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House Committee on Tourism, Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Testimony of Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)

Re: HB 5994 as introduced

Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you for allowing MUCC the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5994 on behalf of the 40,000 sportsmen and women of Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

In 1996, sixty-nine percent of Michigan citizens voted to pass the Michigan Wildlife Management Referendum (Proposal G), which charged the Natural Resource Commission to utilize the principles of sound scientific management in making decisions regarding the taking of game. As an organization composed of sportsmen and women dedicated to the sound, scientific management of wildlife, whose license fees directly support the majority of such management in Michigan, MUCC strongly supports House Bill 5994. This legislation will further ensure that members of the NRC, who make important decisions regarding the taking of game, understand and are a part of its constituency of hunters, anglers and trappers.

While the NRC is currently routinely updated on various DNRE decisions vested in the Department Director (i.e., State Parks, Land/Trail Use, Forestry Management), it's commonly misunderstood that the NRC has statutory authority to issue orders outside of their exclusive authority to regulate the taking of game under Proposal G. While the NRC is not currently required to be consulted on these DNRE functions, Director Humphries has used the monthly NRC meetings as a forum for public transparency on Department decisions and consultation with Commission members.

MUCC believes the Commission plays an important consultation role on non-game management decisions on behalf of the general public it represents. However, because the Commission's authority extends primarily to rules and regulations concerning the taking of game, we support House Bill 5994, which will further ensure members of the Commission are sportsmen and women who more intimately understand the impact of their decisions on Michigan's hunters, anglers, and trappers. We respectfully ask for your "yes" vote on the bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Nyberg", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dave Nyberg

Legislative Affairs Manager